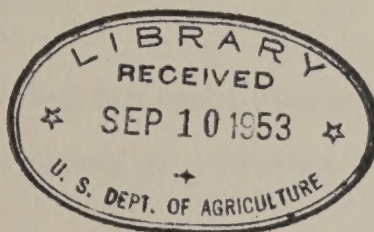


HOW MASS MEDIA CAN HELP FAMILIES MAKE CHOICES  
IN HOME FURNISHINGS\*

SYMPOSIUM MODERATOR ... Jessie Heathman  
NEWSPAPERS ..... Tom Collins  
MAGAZINES ..... Betty Fisk  
Rachel Martens  
RADIO ..... Gene Seehafer  
TELEVISION ..... Joseph Sperry



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\*Papers given at National Home Furnishings Conference, Chicago, Ill.  
April 30, 1953.





NEWSPAPERS

by

Tom Collins  
Chicago Daily News  
Chicago, Illinois

A great deal of information is lost because extension workers and metropolitan newspapers have failed to get together; the extension staff should take the initiative.

The rule for getting a story in metropolitan newspapers is to know the people who have charge of such items.

DISCUSSION:

Q. - How long in advance should copy be in?

A. - Find out from newspaper.

Q. - How to start a series of articles?

A. - Make contact with the editors.

Q. - How interested are papers in research?

A. - Good.

Q. - What is the system for rewrite?

A. - Newspapers prefer to do that.

Q. - How to handle stories for 4-5 different metropolitan dailies?

A. - Give stories to different papers on different days.

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\*Notes on talk given at National Home Furnishings Conference at Chicago, Illinois, April 30, 1953.



HOW MAGAZINES CAN HELP FAMILIES MAKE  
CHOICES IN HOME FURNISHINGS\*

by

Betty Fisk  
Better Homes and Gardens  
Des Moines, Iowa

Every month when homemakers receive their copies of home service magazines - and turn the pages, they're saying, "Tell me something--- sell me something---- to help me plan a better, more comfortable home. Tell me what to do and how to do it ---- what to buy and where to buy it."

And in turning these pages, they're turning to us for----

1. ideas and inspiration -- to give them more attractive and colorful homes.
2. instruction or "how to" -- material on how to do their own papering, painting, or putting down a new linoleum floor. Or how to plan a color scheme or make new draperies.
3. as a guide for buying -- the most practical furnishings to suit their needs and way of living.

Therefore, our job is first to inspire -- to create the desire in homemakers to have a more attractive home, and second to instruct -- to tell them how to do it -- how to make the wisest choices in furnishings, keep them up to date on news in furnishings and current trends. Work 6 months in advance. To publish a home magazine we have to know what our readers want -- what their problems are. Magazine people are a bit nosy, but consequently we're pretty well acquainted with our readers. We have an excellent research department and surveys they have made tell us ----

- they prefer a one-story house, move to country after war - spread out double purpose rooms.
- how much furniture they bought in the past 3 years and what they plan to buy
- that color is their greatest decorating problem
- that they turn to magazines as their greatest source of help in their furnishings and decorating.

Returns on these surveys are as high as 89 percent, so you can see we know our readers preferences and problems.

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\*Talk presented at National Home Furnishings Conference, Chicago, Illinois  
April 30, 1953



HOW MAGAZINES CAN HELP FAMILIES MAKE  
CHOICES IN HOME FURNISHINGS\*

by

Rachel Martens  
Farm Journal  
Philadelphia, Penna.

The techniques and tools in writing stories are the same as in extension. Miss Martens reported that at least half of the time was spent in the field visiting farm homes. During the year from 300-500 homes are visited in that way the philosophy of farm folks is basic. Often magazine editors get leads to stories from extension workers. If State or county workers have material they feel would make a good story, black and white snapshots should be taken and an outline of story sent to the editor. It does not mean all stories are published.

In order to make a story convincing, it must be authentic and the furnishing a little better than the average level of good taste. When an extension worker sends an article it should be sent to one magazine at a time. Part of the editors time is spent in visiting the market and seeing what will be available, doing department store promotion.

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Ways of living have changed because of economics. Therefore articles pitched at today's trends of informal living "how to do it" since labor is hard to get - enjoy doing it.

Let's look at the pages -----

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS GIVES IDEAS

PLUS INSPIRATION

PLUS INSTRUCTION

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS IS A GUIDE TO BUYING

IN EDITORIALS

IN ADVERTISING

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS FOLLOWS INFORMAL CASUAL LIVING TREND

Budget Choices: This is just a brief summary of what our magazine, and others, are doing editorially to help families have better homes. Out in the field we are trying to get closer to the homemaker through our Home Planning Service in 83 department stores -----showing our color film, "The ABC's of Decorating" which has been seen by 1/4 million homemakers -----and through personal contact. We have a sales training course on furnishings and decorating which is being used by many leading department stores in training their sales people to be of more service to the customer by having a greater knowledge of furnishings and decorating.

You, in your work, can be of great service to us in the magazine field, because of your daily contact with the homemakers. You can bring to us more about their needs and desires. Tell us about the homes and families you work with ----perhaps there is one that would make an interesting story and we'd like to share it with our readers. In turn, we are constantly trying to do a better job of giving more ideas and inspiration to the homemakers in the country through our editorial and advertising pages.

All in all, may I borrow a Winchellism and "toss an orchid" to all those connected with mass media. I think we're (and I use the editorial "we") are doing a good job of helping families make wise selections in home furnishings --- but we must continue to do a BETTER job.



RADIO AS A MASS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM  
TO PUBLICIZE HOME FURNISHINGS FACTS\*

by

Gene F. Seehafer  
Research & Sales Promotion Manager  
Columbia Radio Network  
Chicago, Illinois

Radio, America's greatest mass communications medium. There are over 105,000,000 radios in working order in the United States -- in 98% of all American homes. There are over 70 million radio sets in homes, 9 million sets in public places and 25 million radios in automobiles.

The 105 million radio sets figure is larger than the total copies per issue of all magazines, almost twice as great as all copies per issue of newspapers and five times greater than all television sets. Currently there are only 22 million television sets in the country that reach only half of all US families.

And people spend more time listening to the radio than they spend with any other mass communications medium. The American Research Bureau recently reported the average person from coast to coast spent 108 minutes each day with radio--only 43 minutes with television, 34 minutes reading newspapers and only 18 minutes daily reading magazines. These are national average figures.

And once initial preoccupation with the novelty of a new television set has worn off, radio listening patterns revert back to more normal listening levels. We have noted a 37% increase in use of radio sets in television homes in New York City from October 1951 to last October. We have noted a 29% increase in use of radio sets in Chicago television homes during the same one-year period. Truly, radio is the country's mass communications medium, in spite of the preoccupation with radio's glamorous baby brother, television.

American radio stations operate in the public interest, convenience and necessity. This is federal regulation, prescribed by the Communications Act of 1934. In addition, alert radio station managers are always looking for attractive, new, refreshing, interesting vital ideas for broadcast. When you hitch these facts together -- federal regulation encouraging programs in the public interest, convenience and necessity; alert local management, interested in new program ideas -- with one additional research fact, you find radio is ideal for the dissemination of home furnishing information. The radio research fact is this: the radio audience is made up primarily of women. At no time of the day or night are there more men or children in the audience than there are women. And in most cases there are more women in a program's audience than there are men and children combined.

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\*Paper presented at National Home Furnishings Conference at Chicago, Illinois, April 30, 1953.



Let's start from scratch. You are a local home furnishings specialist. You know homemaker's in your area will be interested in many of the activities, especially the new discoveries, in your field. But remember, to get on the air your material must be interesting, timely and newsy. And your manner of presentation must be as professional as possible.

First of all, I would suggest you introduce yourself to the Educational radio station people in your area and talk it over. Broadcasters can be a big help to you as radio consultants, suggesting the very best way to get your facts on the air and how best to utilize air time in presenting your information. Their over-all guidance should be welcomed and encouraged.

In most cases your best contact will be with the radio station's program director and the person in charge of woman's programs. In smaller stations get to know the commercial manager and the station manager as well.

But remember, radio station men and women will accept your material not on a friendship basis--rather on its interest to the radio station audience. Do not make any attempt to force the use of your information releases, or to connive yourself on the air as a program guest, or with a program series.

If your ideas for a story or a press release program are rejected, think about it carefully. Could it have been written better? Was there a sharper angle for exploitation? Or was it simply out and out commercial advertising that can be accepted only at paid advertising rates. No mass communications medium will accept advertising disguised as public service promotion releases. But they will be more than pleased to give publicity to non-profit activities of a public service nature.

There are two basic ways of utilizing radio stations to disseminate your information. First you may submit regular press releases to your local stations. Second, you yourself may appear on the air as an invited program guest or the station may give you time to conduct your own program series.

A regular press release on "The Increased Trend Towards Use of Darker Colors in Home Decorating" might be submitted directly to the attention of the radio station's "News Editor". A special news release on "New Fade-proof Fabric For Davenport and Chairs" might be more interesting to listeners of the station's Homemakers program. Send the press release to the attention of the "Women's Editor" and, of course, if you know her, send it to her personally.

If the local station has a radio columnist you might run across numerous items of information from your field which can be tailor-made for this program. With a bit of thinking and clever ingenuity it is usually possible to find a special twist, a hook, or a gimmick, as it is called in the field, to modify your story somewhat for this special use.



Suppose, for example, one of the newer color combination schemes is chartreuse and red. Let's say that the apartment of an actress currently appearing on the Chicago stage has been redecorated in chartreuse and red. So you write the story for WBBM's program and submit it. Such items find their way on the air rapidly. Since they fit in well with an established program series, and they have an overtone of "exclusive" for the radio personality. Thus you have publicized your home furnishing fact--and have attained your promotional objective. This is just a simple example. There are many other ways more serious facts can be put across if sugar-coated in this manner.

To summarize, regular publicity releases from your office should be submitted to your local radio stations. Standard press releases should be sent to the attention of the "News Editor". Tailor-made releases with a special twist for special audience groups should be submitted to the individual conducting the program--whether it be a woman's program, sports program, a quiz program, an audience participation program or another public-service series.

Incidentally, all CBS network program promotion kits carry special news releases written with just such twists--to make the same announcement appeal to the listener of a woman's program, a musical program, a sports show and the like. A special twist or angle can be worked out with a little ingenuity and thought.

The second way to use radio to disseminate your information is by use of a radio program. When submitting press releases, someone from the radio station will read the story on the air. With a program ordinarily you yourself, as the expert in the field, will appear on the air.

There are two different ways you may go on the air with a radio program as your mass communication vehicle. First, you may be the guest on an established radio program, or you may conduct your own program series.

Let's talk about being a guest first. Ordinarily this would be the Homemakers program or another public-service series conducted by the radio station. Here again, your personal contact with radio station people and your knowledge of such types of programs will pay off.

I would certainly encourage your initial attempts at programs as part of an established program series. Rather than attempting to launch your own program right away, you can get experience in writing scripts, learn to feel at home on the air and can receive the helpful criticism of an experienced broadcaster when you appear as a program guest.

Although home decoration facts can be presented on the program in many forms such as a dramatic sketch, narration and music, a straight talk or an interview, the last two are the most practical for the average home furnishing specialist.



The straight talk is the easiest to do. But even a few minutes of straight talk can prove quite boring to the average listener. Remember, you are challenged to create a portion of a program that is vital, new and interesting to the average listener.

Too many public service broadcasts are poorly presented, reach no public audience and thus cannot do a service. It is up to you to think through your subject, decide on its most interesting points and weave your information about these facts which carry high audience interest.

Your opportunity to appear as a program guest, and also your opportunity to conduct your own program series, is directly proportional to your ability to make your material appealing, stimulating and interesting to the average homemaker listener. And remember, in most cases she is listening to you while she is washing the dishes, feeding the baby, cleaning the house or involved in many other homemaking activities which may be much more interesting to her than your facts. Once you prove to radio station people your ability to inject showmanship into your material, you can be assured not only of air time but of audience interest as well and, what's more important, audience response.

Let's say you have been invited to appear on your local station's Homemakers Program. And let's say you will have approximately 5 to 6 minutes of time at your disposal. You decide to avoid a straight talk, choosing instead the interview as the most desirable method of presentation. The questions and answers, the change in voice, the intrigue of the unexpected, perk up listener's ears. The best type of interview is one that gives all outward appearances of spontaneity. However, these "spontaneous interviews" are usually thoroughly prepared in advance. To begin with the interview will be conducted by an experienced personality --in this case the women's director of the radio station. She is able to keep your interview moving along smoothly, can fill in if there is the slightest lull in conversation or can rephrase questions to bring out full and complete answers and interesting facts.

Since you are the authority on the subject you are the best person to suggest the questions and material to be covered in your interview. Most radio station people will appreciate a typewritten list of questions. This you can easily do in advance, carefully preparing the questions to follow a logical sequence. Arriving at the studio a half hour or so before the broadcast, you can go over the questions and the answers with the program hostess.

But don't be embarrassed if not all the questions are used; if they are not asked in the sequence you listed. The women's director knows her audience better than you. And she is alert to the kind of material that will hold her audience's interest. Usually a brief period of preparation is followed by a dry run of the questions which will be used on the air, giving both you and the program hostess the opportunity to completely familiarize yourselves for the interview.



Often you can exchange programs with others in your field. U. of ILL. for example, has special homemakers programs available on tape for Illinois stations. Often these can be used on your program.

In closing I'd like to mention a few do's and don'ts for the use of radio programs to publicize home furnishings information. Practically everyone in this room knows these points, I'm certain, but a refresher often is helpful.

I think you'll get a kick out of some of the transcribed excerpts and I don't imply that YOU are that broadcaster. But it is the kind of thing which gets on the air once in a while and which kills audiences and which should be avoided like the plague.

Here are the Do's and Don'ts --

1. DO PLAN WELL IN ADVANCE. Don't write your program the very last minute. Don't be the kind of mixed-up home furnishings commentator I'd like to introduce to you now. We call her Mary McFumbles!

RECORD: PART 1 -- CUT #1.

2. DO write your talk to appeal to the AVERAGE LISTENER. Avoid professional terms but give it a professional entertainment touch which we call showmanship -- use the INTERESTING ITEMS.
3. DO write simple. Use simple words. Use simple sentences and keep them short. Don't fall into this long-sentence trap Mary McFumbles does:

RECORD: PART 1 -- CUT #2.

4. DO type your script on stiff, regular bond paper. Avoid onion-skin paper--it rattles on the air. Double-space your copy and make as many extra copies as you can. (Engineer, producer, commentator, files) Check to make certain you get material in advance of any deadlines. The average page double spaced can be read in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  minutes--150 words per minute reading speed. Incidentally, never paper-clip or staple script pages together.

5. Practice reading your material and don't be as flustered as Mary McFumbles seems to be on this program. If you make a mistake forget about it.

RECORD: PART 2 -- CUT #1.

6. Avoid the sugar-sweet voice. You want to be pleasant but it's possible to be too pleasant as Mary McFumbles demonstrates on her program:

RECORD: PART 2 -- CUT #2.



Remember, if you lower your voice a half a tone or so for on-the-air work you'll sound much better. That, incidentally, is not only true for radio or public speaking but for normal conversation as well.

7. Dress for radio. Don't wear a long forward-sticking feather in your hat; don't wear a veil over your eyes or lips (enunciation); don't wear jangly bracelets or rattly-buttons.
8. One final DON'T. Don't use your roommate for vocal talent, or your sister-in-law. Here is the kind of trap Mary McFumbles found herself in and here was her incorrect solution.

RECORD: PART 2 -- CUT #3.

How much better it would have been to have used recorded music, available through the local radio station.

9. Promote your series
  - Publicity Releases to local papers
  - Information to women's clubs and homemaking groups
  - On-the-air publicity (non-commercial)
10. Ask for criticism
  - Radio station people
  - Specialists in your field from other areas (sample show)

#### DISCUSSION:

- Q. - Any preference between prepared script and informal chat?
- A. - Recommend use of question outline -- have commentator phrase question -- and interviewee answers questions -- script or offcuff. Hold a dry run rehearsal.



## TELEVISION\*

by

Joseph Sperry

Program Director, TV Programs

National Broadcasting Company

Merchandising Mart Plaza

Chicago, Illinois

Television stations are constantly on the alert for good program material. These may be submitted to the station in the form of press releases or they may be done with program time.

In all instances select those ideas that will appeal to the masses. Put these into the most interesting word setting you can. For program material: select a manner of presentation that can be done as professionally as possible. We recommend the interview plan with prepared outlining -- rehearsed well in advance.

Remember, a simple plan, well executed on the air is far better than a complicated plan (drama) which mis-fires.

Once you can prove to station management your program idea is not an audience-killer, that it will appeal to the average homemaker, that you are prepared to give the series the time and energy it takes to give it a professional polish, you will find TV people receptive to your ideas.

Television will become socially significant part of life. Four methods or a combination of them will be used in presenting programs:

1. Lecture. May add visual aids. It is effective to have words seen at same time as heard.
2. Interview. Takes a little more skill to do a good interview.
3. Demonstration.
4. Dramatic documentary. Utilize actors as well as scenery and sets. The worker as well as viewers identifies what is seen on the screen.

What does homemaker want to know?

1. Freedom to use own ideas. Give them precepts of design, color, composition and economy and let them go on from there.  
Present word pictures (tomato red)

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\*Notes on talk at National Home Furnishings Conference at Chicago, Illinois, April 30, 1953.



2. Entertainment. This side can also give ideas on decoration and design.
3. Telling and advertising.

Possibilities coming up in three dimensional T. V.

DISCUSSION:

Q. - Do T.V. programs offer material to those who see program?

A. - Offer made through and paid by station or source of information.

Q. - Is it wise to offer?

A. - Yes.

Q. - What fields have had best viewer acceptance in T.V.?

A. - Kitchens, living-dining rooms, racket room, color design fabrics, flower arrangements.

Q. - In kitchen is it types of material and arrangement, or what?

- A. -
1. Placement and
  2. efficient operation
  3. preparation and serving
  4. color schemes
  5. materials for floors and counters

Q. - Can one effectively emphasize management angle of kitchen?

A. - Yes, has been done in miniature.